**How hot is TOO hot to work?**

The met office has warned that temperatures could hit 43C over the coming week, which would make it the hottest day ever recorded in the UK.

**If it’s too hot to work, can employee’s leave?**

Under UK law there is currently only a minimum working temperature set, which is 16C. However, if the employee’s work involves rigorous physical effort, the temperature should be at least 13C.

There is unfortunately no meaningful figure that can be placed on high temperatures, to indicate if it is in fact too hot to work. This being said, employers are responsible to ensure their employees and workers are comfortable and in their working environment. This extends to helping them keep cool. Health and safety should also factor into an employer’s consideration as to whether it is too hot to work.

**Can employee’s legally ask for air conditioning in their workplace?**

Employers are obliged to keep employees comfortable, falls within them needing to ensure the working environment is of a reasonable temperature for those using it. From this, the concept known as thermal comfort has been established. By managing the thermal comfort within the workplace employers are more likely to improve morale, productivity and health and safety.

The Health and Safety Executive note the six basic factors to cause temperature discomfort are:

1. Air temperature;
2. Radiant temperature;
3. Air velocity;
4. Humidity;
5. Clothing insulation; and
6. Metabolic heat.

A way in which they suggest you can control the thermal comfort of these factors is by using air conditioning units or air dehumidifiers. If you want further advice on whether you should be installing air conditioning, as you feel are having employee complaints about the temperature in the workplace, then please get in contact via the below contact details.

**Do employees have to wear their usual work attire in sweltering heat?**

This very much depends on the organisation. For example, if you are employing tree surgeons you would not be complying with the health and safety laws and organisational policies if you allowed you employees to not wear their personal protective equipment, such as the thick heavy chainsaw trousers which they most likely do not want to be wearing on an extremely hot day.

In circumstances where it is reasonable for there to be a flexible dress code, such as in an office environment, employers should be doing this to help with employee’s thermal comfort and productivity.

If in doubt whether this applies to you, the Health and Safety Executive provide further information on this.

**How else can employers ensure that thermal comfort is managed well?**

Hybrid working is becoming increasingly popular and making the most of this on an extremely hot day could benefit employers and employees. Employers need to consider whether the building they have is equipped for a heat wave. In doing this they should factor in whether there is a lot of glass, if it is an older building, whether there is good ventilation, and whether or not they already have air conditioning installed.

Employee productivity could be higher, should they be allowed to work from home in a cooler environment. If this is not possible then employers need to control the thermal comfort of their employees in the workplace as best as they can, given their circumstances. Ways to do this is by providing fans, if safe to do so, in the event they do not have aircon.

If you have any concerns over your workplace, or employees refusing to attend work during the heatwave, please make contact via our new enquiries section of the website.